DANIEL KRAUS • LACI • MARCO LESKO

TROJAN

"Fantasy and the dark web blends in this brilliant/relevant horror tale."
— UN CÓMIC MÁS

AWA

nce upon a time, we lived alongside Legends. Creatures of myth. Centaurs, fauns, gorgons, kelpies, gnomes, and more. They were spectacular. Majestic. Powerful. Peaceful. Pure. In comparison, we were ugly. Weak. Warmongering. Rotten.

Is it any wonder we could not live alongside them any longer?

We cast out the Legends because we could not bear how they made us feel. They escaped to the fringes of society, taking with them our best chances for hope. For magic. For possibility. Left alone, we turned against one another. Our world decayed. Festered. Putrefied.

And we had no one to blame but ourselves.

TROJAN

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PLEASE... I TOLD YOU...

...I'LL DO WHAT YOU WANT... ANYTHING YOU WANT...

ZZZZ-ZZZZZ

WAIT! DON'T! DON'T!

ZZZZ-ZZZZZZZZ

PLEASE STOP! PLEASE!

KAAPO ENTERTAINMENT

TIME UNTIL NEXT SHOW:
30 DAYS, 0 HOURS, 0 MINUTES,
0 SECONDS.

CONFIRMED VIEWERS: 0

RESERVE SEAT *HERE.*
PREVIEW *HERE.*

YOU SPEND ENOUGH TIME ON THESE STREETS, YOU START RECOGNIZING TROUBLE **BEFORE** IT HAPPENS.

CONFIRMED VIEWERS: 1

HEY, *FEY.*

SHIT. JUST KEEP WALKING, DUDE.

SPEED LIMIT 15

YO. I'M TALKING TO YOU, FEY.

I'M NOT--I'M NO--

NO, DON'T TURN AROUND, DON'T--

NEVER SHOW THEM THE WHITES OF YOUR EYES, OLD MAN. NOT AROUND HERE, ANYWAY.

KRISSHK!

*SHOULD WE **DO** SOMETHING?*

CONFIRMED VIEWERS: 3

HEY! STOP--

SHH! YOU WANT THOSE PUNKS TO HEAR YOU?

WHY WOULD THEY BOTHER *ME?*

WHY DO SHITHEADS LIKE THAT BOTHER ANYONE? BECAUSE THEY *CAN.*

IF YOU'RE SO SCARED OF THEM, THEN WHY ARE *YOU* HERE?

OH.

WHY ELSE WOULD *ANYONE* BE HERE? WHAT ARE *YOU* PICKING UP FROM KOVA, GIRLIE?

I DON'T KNOW ANY KOVA. AND DON'T CALL ME GIRLIE. NAME'S NESSA.

YOU'RE OBVIOUSLY NOT TWEAKING. AND KOVA DOESN'T PIMP. IF THAT'S YOUR PLAN, YOU CHOSE THE WRONG GETUP.

IT SO HAPPENS I'M NOT. BUT IF I WAS, WHAT'S IT TO YOU?

YOU MAY BE SOME RANDOM GIRLIE...BUT YOU THINK I WANT YOU TO END UP LIKE *THAT?*

CONFIRMED VIEWERS: 7

YOU'RE A REGULAR KNIGHT IN SHINING HOODIE.

PEOPLE TELL ME THAT ALL THE TIME.

SERIOUSLY, THOUGH. YOU JUST OUT HERE STRETCHING YOUR LEGS? HAVE A SUICIDE WISH?

JUST LOOKING AROUND, I GUESS.

FOR WHAT? DEGRADATION? MORAL TURPITUDE? SHOULD BE ABLE TO FIND THAT OUTSIDE *ANY* FRONT DOOR.

FOR *HELP.*

HELP? OUT *HERE?* I HATE TO BREAK IT TO YOU, BUT IT'S BEEN A MINUTE SINCE ANYONE IN THIS WORLD HELPED *ANYONE.* MAYBE YOU HAVEN'T NOTICED.

YEAH. I GOT EYES. I JUST THINK...

...WE COULD GET IT BACK. THAT HOPE WE USED TO FEEL. IT'S NOT QUITE OUT OF OUR GRASP. NOT YET.

NOOO!

PLEASE... I'M NOT... I'M NOT...

SHIT. SHIT. WHAT DO WE *DO?*

WHAT DO WE DO? THERE'S ONLY ONE THING *TO* DO...

CONFIRMED VIEWERS: 15

WAIT! CALL SOMEONE! I DON'T HAVE A PHONE!

DON'T HAVE A PHONE? YOU DON'T HAVE A ***CHANCE***. GO HOME, GIRLIE.

I'M NOT A--

RRRRIP

HOLY SHIT. YOU WERE RIGHT...

HE ***IS*** FEY. GROSS.

THEN LET'S GIVE HIM WHAT HE ***REALLY*** DESERVES.

CONFIRMED VIEWERS: 33

DO YOU THINK THAT OLD GUY WAS REALLY...

OF COURSE HE WAS! I CAN SMELL A FEY A MILE OFF! NOW LEAVE ME ALONE!

HOLD ON--

BITCH, YOU DON'T WANT TO MESS WITH ME!

I DON'T CARE WHAT YOUR ANGLE IS, GIRLIE! YOU NEED TWENTY BUCKS? A HOT DINNER? A PLACE TO CRASH? I CAN'T GIVE YOU ANY OF IT!

SEE, IT DOESN'T MATTER IF IT'S SOME OLD FEY GETTING PUMMELED OR SOME RANDO GIRL TRYING TO SWINDLE ME.

NEVER GET INVOLVED. THAT'S MY MOTTO.

BUT YOU DO, DON'T YOU? YOU ***DO*** GET INVOLVED.

WHAT DO YOU WANT?

WHAT DO YOU THINK? I NEED A ***TOUR GUIDE.***

CONFIRMED VIEWERS: 49

NOT OKAY. NOT OKAY NOT OKAY NOT OKAY TO *EVER* TALK TO ME IN PUBLIC. NOT ABOUT THIS. WHO THE FUCK *ARE* YOU?

I TOLD YOU. NESSA.

WHO SENT YOU? HOW'D YOU FIND OUT ABOUT ME?

DO YOU ALWAYS ASK YOUR CLIENTS THAT?

MY *CLIENTS* DO NOT APPROACH ME ON THE FUCKING *STREET*. THEY CONTACT ME THROUGH ENCRYPTED PROXY--IT'S NONE OF YOUR *BUSINESS* HOW THEY CONTACT ME!

WHAT KIND OF TOUR ARE YOU AFTER? *SPECIFICALLY?*

I'M NOT GOING TO TELL YOU HERE AND GIVE YOU A CHANCE TO SAY YOU CAN'T HELP.

THAT'S TOO BAD BECAUSE THAT'S THE ONLY WAY THIS WORKS.

YOU THINK I TRACKED YOU DOWN WITHOUT FIGURING OUT WHERE YOU LIVE FIRST? WHAT YOUR NAME IS?

IS THAT WHAT YOU THINK, *DIRK?*

IF YOU DON'T TAKE ME WITH YOU RIGHT NOW, DIRK, I HAVE ALL SORTS OF THINGS I CAN SEND TO THE COPS...

CONFIRMED VIEWERS: 71

NO ONE TELLS ME WHAT TO DO! YOU GOT THAT?

IF I'M NOT HOME BY MORNING TO STOP IT, AN EMAIL GETS SENT OUT, DIRK! TO EVERY PRECINCT IN THE CITY!

WITH ALL THE INFO I'VE COLLECTED ON YOU! YOU REALLY WANT THAT?!

I NEED TO MAKE A LIVING, TOO, YOU KNOW.

I KNOW. I'M SORRY IT HAS TO BE LIKE THIS.

WHATEVER. YOU'LL END UP DEAD IF YOU STAY HERE--AND ON *MY* CONSCIENCE. COME ON.

LIKE I SAID...

"...YOU'RE MY KNIGHT IN SHINING HOODIE."

28 STREET

WHAT YOU'RE FEELING RIGHT NOW? THAT FEAR?

FWOOOM

CONFIRMED VIEWERS: 98

FEY

THAT'S BECAUSE YOU'RE AFRAID FOR YOUR BODY. PHYSICAL PAIN. BLEEDING OUT. BUT WHERE WE'RE GOING, THERE *IS* NO BODY. UNDERSTAND?

IS THAT LADY FEY?

ANY DAMAGE YOU TAKE WILL BE IN YOUR ***MIND.*** THOSE CUTS DON'T HEAL. YOU CAN'T UNSEE WHAT YOU'VE SEEN.

IS THAT KID FEY?

ONCE YOU SEE TOO MUCH...YOUR WHOLE LIFE GETS FUCKED. I'M PROOF OF THAT. IF YOU'VE BEEN FOLLOWING ME, YOU KNOW. I DIDN'T PICK UP THAT CRACK PIPE FOR SHITS AND GIGGLES.

LOOK OUT!

MINI MARKET

FOOD & WINE

COST PRICE

FOOD & WINE

OH NO!

CONFIRMED VIEWERS: 124

SLAT

NEVER GETS OLD, DOES IT?

I REMEMBER WHEN I HADN'T SEEN A SINGLE SUICIDE...MUCH LESS FIVE...OR SIX...I'VE LOST COUNT.

GROOWR! ROWF! BROOF!GWARF!

YOU NEVER FORGET YOUR FIRST, THOUGH, RIGHT?

REX

BWO-OOOO...

DON'T MIND REX.

THIS... IS IT?

YOU WERE EXPECTING *ENIAC*?

EENY-WHAT?

COMPUTER JOKE. FORGET IT.

SHH, BABY. I KNOW. I'M SORRY. THE WEIRD-SMELLING LADY WON'T BE HERE LONG.

YOU KNOW HOW TO MAKE A GIRL FEEL GOOD.

HUH. NAKAMOTO'S NEVER MET ANYONE ELSE. I GUESS HE DOESN'T KNOW ABOUT STRANGER-DANGER.

CONFIRMED VIEWERS: 140

KUK KUK KUK!

FINE. WHATEVER GETS YOU OUT OF MY LIFE THE QUICKEST.

NEVER ATTEMPT THIS, YOU GOT THAT? I'M A FUCKING ***GHOST*** ON THE DARKNET. GOT ME A STEALTH ADDRESS, A BAJILLION ONION-ROUTERS, CRYPTO WAY BEYOND PGP. YOU TRY THIS, ANY OF THIS SHIT...

ALL'S I'M SAYING IS, HOW PEOPLE ARE ONLINE IS ***NOTHING*** LIKE THEY ARE IRL.

UGH.

CA-CLICK

IT'S JUST A FACADE. THROWS TOURISTS OFF THE SCENT. IT'S LIKE ANYTHING ELSE IN LIFE: YOU JUST GOTTA KNOW WHICH DICK TO CLICK.

DON'T BE TOO IMPRESSED. HACKING TODAY IS LESS CRUNCHING CODE AND MORE GETTING BOOMERS TO HAND OVER THEIR EMAIL PASSWORDS.

SO...***NESSA***...IT'S PROM NIGHT AND I'M YOUR LIMO DRIVER. I CAN RECOMMEND ALL SORTS OF ROMANTIC LOCALES...

CONFIRMED VIEWERS: 152

CREDIT CARD DUMPS. I CAN GET YOU A DISCOUNT PER 500. USE THEM RIGHT AND EVERYONE HAS A MERRY CHRISTMAS.

WANT TO DROP SOME POUNDS-- LIKE, *ALL* OF THEM? WE GOT PRO-ANA, PRO-MIA, THINSPIRATION SITES LIKE YOU WOULDN'T BELIEVE. CUTTING, IF YOU'RE INTO THAT. SUICIDE SOLUTIONS, TOO. NO JUDGMENT.

YOU GOT A YARD, NESSA? MAYBE WE FIX YOU UP WITH AN EXOTIC ANIMAL. KAKAPO PARROT, LEATHERBACK TURTLE. ONLY 70 AMUR LEOPARDS LEFT ON EARTH. BE PRETTY RAD TO OWN ONE, YEAH?

MAYBE YOU GOT A THING FOR NAZIS. LOTS OF FOLKS DO. IT'S A WHOLE FETISH.

NO, YOU'RE NOT ARYAN. BUT YOU GOT DAMAGE, I KNOW YOU DO, OTHERWISE YOU WOULDN'T BE HERE.

WHY MAKE IT COMPLICATED. DRUGS, AM I RIGHT? AUSTRALIAN VALIUM. BARS OF XANS STRAIGHT FROM PFIZER. COKE, KETA, LSD. TESTOSTERONE? IT'S YOUR PROM. YOU TELL ME.

OR MAYBE A GENTLY USED GULFSTREAM JET? COULD BE YOU'RE RICHER THAN YOU LOOK.

LOOK. I DON'T LIKE TO POINT CLIENTS TOWARD GUNS. WORLD'S TOO VIOLENT AS IS. BUT FOR YOU? I'LL MAKE AN EXCEPTION. WALKING AROUND AT NIGHT LIKE YOU DO, YOU ***NEED*** SOMETHING DEADLY.

BUT I DON'T BLAME YOU IF YOU DON'T WANT TO DO THE DEED YOURSELF. DARKNET'S FULL OF HITMEN. WE CAN FLOAT OUT THE CONTRACT, GET A COMPETITIVE BID. SAY THE WORD.

THEN THERE'S SEX. OF COURSE THERE'S SEX. SEX KINKS. SEX SLAVES. BUT I WON'T FIND YOU CHILD PORN. WON'T DO IT. THE NSA'S ALL OVER THAT SHIT.

NO. NONE OF IT.

CONFIRMED VIEWERS: 170

ENOUGH WITH GAMES. YOU'RE A BIG GIRL. TELL ME WHAT YOU WANT.

NAKAMOTO. HERE. COME HERE, YOU DIRTY TRAITOR.

DEATH.

I WANT TO SEE... DEATH.

WELL. YOU CAN'T JUDGE A BOOK BY ITS COVER, CAN YOU?

I WAS JUST THINKING THE SAME THING.

WHAT'S THAT SUPPOSED TO MEAN? JUST BECAUSE I KNOW THE DARKEST ROADS DOESN'T MEAN I DRIVE DOWN THEM.

I JUST MEAN...YOU PUT OUT THIS AIR...BIG TOUGH GUY OF THE STREETS...

CONFIRMED VIEWERS: 186

BUT WOULD A BIG TOUGH GUY BE PLAYING O.G. *LEGEND OF ZELDA?*

Nintendo ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM

ZELDA

HEY. THAT WAS MY BROTHER'S CONSOLE. I MEAN...IT'S A GOOD GAME.

IS *LUCKY CHARMS* THE TOUGH-GUY CEREAL OF CHOICE?

I DON'T-- I MEAN, MY MOM USED TO BUY IT--

IF I'M NOT MISTAKEN, THAT'S A SECURITY BLANKET.

LOOK--I--I WASN'T EXACTLY EXPECTING VISITORS--

THEN THERE'S THE FACT THAT A) YOU HAVE A FERRET, AND B) NAMED IT AFTER SOME ANIME CHARACTER, I ASSUME.

I'LL HAVE YOU KNOW THAT SATOSHI NAKAMOTO INVENTED THE BLOCKCHAIN. NOT THAT THERE'S ANYTHING WRONG WITH ANIME.

ALL RIGHT. YOU WANT DEATH? I'LL SHOW YOU DEATH.

CA-CLICK

CHUNK-A-CHUNK-A

CONFIRMED VIEWERS: 195

THERE. DOES *THAT* DO IT FOR YOU? THAT *TURN YOU ON?*

TALIBAN BEHEADING. THE SHOTS EVEN GORE SITES CAN'T SHOW YOU.

MEXICAN GANG WARNING. YOU'RE DEFINITELY NOT SEEING *THIS* ON THE NEWS. WHO GIVES A FUCK, RIGHT? LIFE DOWN THERE IS CHEAP.

YOU WANT TO SEE MISCARRIED BABIES? RECIPES ON HOW TO COOK PEOPLE, BROKEN DOWN BY ETHNICITY, GENDER, AND WEIGHT?

SUICIDES ON TAPE, PROBABLY UPLOADED BY YOUR FRIENDLY LOCAL COPPER?

STOP. PLEASE STOP.

SHOW ME... *SNUFF.*

CONFIRMED VIEWERS: 204

I DON'T GET YOU! YOU'RE *CRYING!* YOU LOOK LIKE YOU MIGHT BARF ON MY CARPET! AND NOW YOU'RE ASKING FOR SNUFF--DEATH FOR MONEY? *IT DOES NOT EXIST.*

DON'T YOU TRY TO INTIMIDATE ME! I DON'T HAVE ANYTHING LEFT TO LOSE!

SAYING SNUFF DOESN'T EXIST IS LIKE SAYING THERE'S NO LIFE IN SPACE! OF COURSE IT EXISTS! AND IF ANYONE CAN FIND IT, IT'S YOU! DIRK OVERHOLT! AGE 30! SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER 987-65-4320!

YOU STILL WANT TO MESS WITH ME? *DO* YOU?

...DIRK?

CONFIRMED VIEWERS: 215

IF YOU WANT TO SMOKE YOUR...YOUR OTHER THING...

MY CRACK PIPE? FUCK YOU.

I'M SORRY. IT'S JUST...I REALLY NEED TO--

YOU THINK I WANTED TO END UP HERE? DOING WHAT I DO?

NONE OF US WANTED TO END UP LIKE THIS.

WHEN I SAID THERE'S ROADS I DON'T DRIVE DOWN...I MEANT IT.

BUT ANYONE IN MY BIZ HAS HEARD SHIT. YOU HEAR IT OFTEN ENOUGH, IT'S ALMOST LIKE YOU'VE ACTUALLY ***SEEN*** IT. THE FILM GETS DEVELOPED IN YOUR BRAIN. AND THEN IT SCREENS NONSTOP. ***NONSTOP.***

THE CONJOINED TWINS WHOSE PARTS ARE TORTURED SIMULTANEOUSLY TO SEE IF THEY REACT DIFFERENTLY. MENGELE SHIT.

CONFIRMED VIEWERS: 227

QUADRIPLEGICS ARE THE BEST TO TORTURE--THAT'S THE RUMOR. THEY CAN'T FEEL WHAT'S HAPPENING TO THEM, SO THEY STAY CONSCIOUS LONGER THAN MOST.

BUT YOU WANT TO FETCH THE HIGHEST PRICE? THEY SAY THAT'S WHERE C-LIST CELEBRITIES COME IN. EX-ATHLETES. FORMER CHILD STARS. PEOPLE YOU FORGOT EXISTED--UNTIL YOU PAY YOUR MONEY AND WATCH THEM DIE.

WHAT'S THE WORST THING YOU'VE EVER HEARD OF?

RUMOR HAS IT, THERE'S THIS GUY. THE P.T. BARNUM OF SNUFF. ULTRA-HIGH-ROLLERS PAY CLOSE TO A MILLION TO ACCESS HIS LIVE FEEDS. HE SPECIALIZES IN FEYS. LAST I HEARD, THIS GUY...WELL...

CONFIRMED VIEWERS: 238

...HE CHOPPED UP A MERMAID. LIKE SUSHI. GET IT?

WHAT... WHAT'S THIS GUY...WHAT'S HIS NAME?

THEY CALL HIM *KAAPO.*

DON'T EVEN LIKE SAYING IT OUT LOUD.

KAAPO. THAT'S A FINNISH VARIANT OF ***GABRIEL***--"GOD'S STRONGEST MAN."

YEAH, WELL, HE'S STRONG, ALL RIGHT. *IF* HE EXISTS. AND I GUESS HE DOES, RIGHT? IF ONLY AS A PHANTOM TO SCARE ALL US SLEAZE-BALLS STRAIGHT.

I NEED TO KNOW. IF HE'S REAL. THAT'S WHAT I NEED YOU TO SHOW ME.

ALL RIGHT. BUT HOLD ON TO YOUR FUCKING HAT.

IS THIS REALLY THE TIME TO BUY FERRET FOOD?

Pet Foodies

CA-CLICK

CONFIRMED VIEWERS: 250

TOLKIEN FANDOM? WHAT ARE WE DOING HERE, DIRK?

HOBBITCH

CA-CLICK

OBAMA CREATED COVID IN KENYAN LAB

CA-CLICK

THERE'S PARTS OF THE DARKNET YOU CAN'T LOG INTO WITHOUT FIRST VISITING A SPECIFIC SERIES OF WEBSITES IN A SPECIFIC SEQUENCE. WE CALL THEM "DISGUISED COOKIE SITES."

YOU'RE WASTING MY TIME.

Select all images wi

I HATE THESE THINGS.

EVERYONE DOES. IGNORE THE PHOTOS. THINK OF THE SQUARES AS A PHONE KEYPAD, 1 THROUGH 9. YOU JUST NEED TO KNOW THE CODE TO DIAL. AND WHAT DID I SAY ABOUT BOOMERS AND THEIR PASSWORDS?

CHUNK-A-CHUNK-A

VERIFY

KAAPO ENTERTAINMENT

TIME UNTIL NEXT SHOW:
24 DAYS, 2 HOURS, 44 MINUTES, 12 SECONDS.

CONFIRMED VIEWERS: 250

RESERVE SEAT *HERE*.
PREVIEW *HERE*.

SHIT. HERE IT IS. I DIDN'T KNOW IF IT WOULD WORK.

CLICK THE PREVIEW.

I TOLD YOU, ONCE YOU ***SEE*** THINGS, YOU CAN'T--

CLICK IT!

GIF

CA-CLICK

OH, NO.

COULD BE FAKE. COULD BE SOME TOM SAVINI SHIT.

CONFIRMED VIEWERS: 269

I NEVER ASK THIS. BUT I GOTTA. WHY?

YOU MEAN, "WHAT'S A NICE GIRL LIKE ME DOING IN A PLACE LIKE THIS?"

WE'VE ESTABLISHED HOW SUGAR-AND-SPICE YOU ARE. BUT YEAH.

I'M ABOUT TO TRUST YOU WITH SOMETHING.

NO ONE'S ASKING YOU TO DO THAT...

WHOA. HOLD ON. WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

YOU ASKED ME WHY I'M HERE. THOSE SNUFF FILMS?

I WANT TO ***BE*** IN ONE.

CONFIRMED VIEWERS: 284

WHAT? NO. THAT'S-- THAT'S--

IT'S MY MOTHER. SHE'S DYING. AND IT'S MY FAULT. THESE SNUFF PRODUCERS, THEY MUST ***PAY***, RIGHT? NEARLY 300 SICKOS SIGNED UP ALREADY? THEY MUST PAY ***WELL.***

THIS IS SOME SORT OF TRAP. PUT YOUR CLOTHES ON AND GET OUT.

I'M READY TO SACRIFICE MYSELF. KAAPO WILL PAY A FINDER'S FEE FOR ME--AND IT'S ALL YOURS. AS LONG AS WE FIX IT SO THE BULK GOES TO MY MOM. I KNOW YOU CAN SET IT UP. THAT'S WHY I CHOSE YOU.

YOU CHOSE ME BECAUSE I'M BROKE! BECAUSE I'M A JUNKIE WHO CAN'T SAY NO! ***THAT'S*** WHY YOU CHOSE ME!

LET'S FIND ANOTHER WAY. ALL RIGHT? YOU'RE PRETTY. I'LL SET YOU UP AS A CAMGIRL. BILLION-DOLLAR-A-YEAR INDUSTRY. YOU GO HARDCORE A COUPLE MONTHS, YOUR MOM WILL--

I ALREADY THOUGHT OF THAT. I DON'T HAVE THE CREATIVITY. OR THE TIME. IT'S GOT TO BE ***THIS*** AND IT'S GOT TO BE ***NOW.***

WHAT MAKES YOU THINK KAAPO WOULD WANT ***YOU?*** YOU'RE JUST SOME FUCKING GIRL!

IS THAT RIGHT?

FLUTTER-FLUTTER

CONFIRMED VIEWERS: 300

...A FAERIE?

THE RAREST "FEY" OF ALL. WHAT DO YOU THINK KAAPO WOULD PAY TO HAVE ME? TO DESTROY ME? I ***NEED*** THIS, DIRK. MY ***MOTHER*** NEEDS IT.

DON'T FEEL BAD YOU DIDN'T KNOW.

IT'S ALWAYS HARD TO SAY WHAT'S HIDING BENEATH THE SURFACE.

ISSUE #1 VARIANT COVER BY
MIKE DEODATO JR.
AND LEE LOUGHRIDGE

WE DIDN'T USED TO BE LIKE THIS.

WE WEREN'T PERFECT. WE WERE WRAPPED UP IN OUR OWN TROUBLES. OUR OWN PETTY DRAMAS.

BUT WE USED TO WATCH OUT FOR ONE ANOTHER.

WE USED TO RECOGNIZE ONE ANOTHER'S BASIC HUMANITY.

EVEN IF WE WEREN'T ALL FULLY HUMAN.

WHAT **HAPPENED** TO US?

IT'S NOT RHETORICAL. I **KNOW** WHAT HAPPENED. WE ALL KNOW. IT JUST HURTS TOO MUCH TO THINK ABOUT IT.

THERE WERE LEADERS WHO DIVIDED US. WHO REORGANIZED US INTO OPPOSING ARMIES. MADE ENEMIES OUT OF LOVED ONES. TAUGHT US TO HATE LIKE NEVER BEFORE.

WE QUIT CARING WHAT HAPPENED TO THESE "ENEMIES."

THEY SUFFERED. THEY STARVED. THEY SICKENED. AND SOME ESSENTIAL LIGHT WITHIN ALL OF US GOT SNUFFED OUT.

THAT LIGHT WAS CALLED **HOPE**. IT'S SUCH A SHAME THAT IT'S GONE...

...WHEN THERE'S SO MUCH WONDER LEFT IN THIS WORLD TO SHARE.

WHEN PEOPLE LOST HOPE, THEY LOST THEIR CAPACITY FOR AWE. BEINGS LIKE US--THE LEGENDS-- WE ARE **POWERED** BY AWE. WE DIDN'T KNOW IT EITHER...UNTIL IT WENT AWAY.

SOON OUR PRESENCE ONLY REMINDED PEOPLE OF HAPPIER DAYS. WE MADE THEM JEALOUS AND BITTER. WE ENRAGED THEM. SOON WE BECAME OUTCASTS. FREAKS. PUSHED TO THE FRINGES.

NOW WE'RE FORCED TO HIDE WHAT WE WERE ONCE PROUD OF. WITH HUMAN CLOTHING. A LITTLE SPLASH OF GLAMOR TO PUT THE NORMALS OFF OUR SCENT.

EXCEPT HERE. HERE WE LEGENDS CAN STILL BE LEGENDARY.

BUT FOR HOW MUCH LONGER?

WHERE'S ARTHUR?

IS HE...?

IT'S GOOD TO SEE YOU SAFE, NESSA. ART'S IN THE TENT.

HE'S HANGING TOUGH.

ARTHUR! I'M SORRY! I'M SO SORRY!

DON'T BE, CHILD.

I COULD HAVE HELPED. I ***WANTED*** TO HELP.

MY JOB WAS TO DISTRACT HIM LONG ENOUGH FOR YOU TO MAKE CONTACT. AND I DID THAT. I JUST... DISTRACTED HIM IN A DIFFERENT WAY THAN EXPECTED.

I JUST--I DON'T KNOW IF--IF ALL THIS IS WORTH IT...

IT WILL BE. IT ***HAS*** TO BE. HE HELPED YOU, YES?

YES...

AND HE BELIEVED YOUR STORY ABOUT A POOR, AILING OLD MOTHER?

I DON'T NEED A STUPID MOTHER. NOT WHEN I HAVE YOU. ***ALL*** OF YOU.

WE RECIPROCATE FULLY...BUT PERHAPS =UNF= DO NOT HUG ME QUITE SO HARD...

WHAT IF IT DOESN'T ***WORK***, ARTHUR?

IT ***WILL.***

WHAT IF I SCREW IT UP? WHAT IF ALL I END UP DOING IS TURNING PEOPLE AGAINST US EVEN MORE? WHAT IF THEY RISE UP AND FIND US HERE? WHAT IF THEY BURN IT ALL DOWN?

THEN THEY BURN IT ALL DOWN.

LIVING IN THE SHADOWS IS ONE THING. BUT WE LEGENDS HAVE OUR PRIDE.

WE HAVE OUR ***DUTY.*** TO OTHERS LIKE US.

WE'VE BEEN QUIET FOR TOO LONG.

YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE OF US WITH THE STRENGTH TO DO THIS.

THEY THINK I'M STRONG. INVULNERABLE. BUT I DON'T KNOW.

I THINK OF THE THINSPIRATION SITES DIRK SHOWED ME. THE MENTALITY IT TAKES TO STARVE YOURSELF. IT'S SICK. BUT MAYBE THAT'S THE KIND OF STEEL I NEED.

Suicide
> By firearm
> By suffocation
By overdose
By jumping
By cutting

300 mg
SLEEP

THE SUICIDE SOLUTION SITES. THEY'RE WRONG. SO WRONG. BUT WHAT IF THAT'S THE MINDSET I NEED TO EMULATE? I TRICKED DIRK INTO OPENING THAT DOOR. NOW...

...I JUST NEED THE COURAGE TO WALK THROUGH IT.

SMRUNCH

ARGH!

...JUST GIVE ME... ⩥GASP⩤... ONE MORE DAY... ⩥GASP⩤...

MR. KOVA *GAVE* YOU ANOTHER DAY. AND THEN A BONUS DAY AFTER THAT. AT THIS POINT, YOU'RE STRAIGHT-UP STEALING FROM HIM, CRACKHEAD.

...NO... ⩥GASP⩤... THAT'S NOT TRUE...

MR. KOVA WARNED YOU. NEXT TIME YOU TAKE FROM SANTA, SANTA'S GONNA TAKE FROM YOU...

PLEASE! I'M TRYING! I SWEAR IF YOU JUST GIVE ME ONE MORE--

HO-HO-FUCKING-HO.

SKLORCH

AHHHH!

DINER

MY GODS. DIRK. YOU OKAY?

...I'LL GET IT TOMORROW... JUST GIVE ME TILL...

...GIRLIE?

NESSA. BUT I'LL LET YOU CALL ME *GIRLIE* JUST THIS ONCE.

THANK YOU--FOR FINDING ME. I'M FUCKED. I'M SO FUCKING FUCKED.

SHH. IT'LL BE OKAY. LET'S GET YOU CLEANED UP.

TWO COFFEES. AND ONE STRAW.

THAT'LL BUY YOU TWENTY MINUTES. GOT THAT? I CAN'T HAVE THAT BLOODY MUG SCARING OFF MY REGULARS.

STRAW'S IN THE HOLDER.

DON'T YOU GOT A LITTLE...I DON'T KNOW...*FAERIE DUST* YOU CAN SPRINKLE ON ME? MAKE THE PAIN GO AWAY?

MAYBE IN THE OLD DAYS. DOESN'T WORK LIKE THAT ANYMORE.

S'OKAY. DINER COFFEE'S THE NEXT BEST--*OW.*

HOW'D YOU END UP LIKE THIS?

ME? I SHOULD BE ASKING *YOU*. YOU'RE THE ONE WITH A DEATH WISH.

I TOLD YOU. MY MOM. THINGS ARE ROUGH THESE DAYS FOR ALL THE LEGENDS.

LEGENDS...HAVEN'T HEARD THAT TERM IN A WHILE. SOUNDS KIND OF HIGH-AND-MIGHTY.

JUST BECAUSE EVERYONE SAYS ***FEY*** DOESN'T MEAN IT'S NOT A SLUR. I THINK I'VE EARNED YOUR RESPECT. HAVEN'T I?

ALL RIGHT, ALL RIGHT. WHATEVER MISS NESSA THE FANTASTIC LEGEND ASKS, I'M HAPPY TO COMPLY. SO...MY LOWLY STATE. HOW I ENDED UP AT IT...

GUESS I WASN'T TOO POPULAR IN SCHOOL. NO CHANGE THERE, HUH?

SO I DID WHAT EVERY DISAFFECTED PUNK-ASS BITCH IN MY DEMOGRAPHIC DID IN THOSE DAYS. I BECAME A TROLL.

YOU DON'T SEEM LIKE A TROLL TO ME. AND I'VE KNOWN *ACTUAL TROLLS.*

THAT'S BECAUSE PEOPLE THINK TROLLING IS ABOUT FLAME WARS. IT'S NOT. IT'S ABOUT ***PUSHING***. BEYOND ORDINARY WAYS OF INTERACTING. BEYOND ANY DOOR ANYONE PUTS UP.

I SEE. YOU'RE A MISUNDERSTOOD WARRIOR.

DON'T GET ME WRONG. I DID SOME SHOCK-TROLLING IN MY DAY...

"THE GOATSE LINKS ALL OVER THE WEDDING MESSAGE BOARDS? THAT WAS ME.

"THEN I MOVED TO SENDING ***BLACK FAXES***--A TRICK TO WASTE THE FAX INK AT CROOKED BUSINESSES."

"SO YOU ***DID*** HAVE MORALS. ONCE UPON A TIME."

TROLLING GOT TOO EASY, THAT'S ALL. THWARTING ASSHOLES WAS MORE CHALLENGING. I STARTED WITH SHITTY EX-BOYFRIENDS WHO'D POST "LIFE-RUIN" PHOTOS OF OLD GIRLFRIENDS. GOT A DOZEN OF THEM ARRESTED.

THAT... HAPPENED TO ME.

FEYS USE SOCIAL MEDIA?

LEGENDS.

WHEN I WAS YOUNGER, YEAH. BEFORE WE ALL GOT CHASED FROM OUR HOMES. I WAS MASQUERADING AS A NORMAL GIRL. I ***WAS*** A NORMAL GIRL. NORMAL CRUSHES. NORMAL BAD DECISIONS.

"LIFE RUIN"-- IT'S A GOOD TERM FOR IT. GUESS MY LIFE HAS BEEN RUINED TWICE NOW. WHY NOT A THIRD TIME, YOU KNOW?

I DON'T LIKE WHEN YOU SAY THAT.

I COULD HAVE USED YOUR SERVICES BACK THEN. SAME AS NOW.

IN TROLL-ESE, GOOD DEEDS MADE ME A "MORALFAG"--EXCUSE MY FRENCH. OR A "WHITEKNIGHT"--A TROLL WHO RIDES TO THE RESCUE OF A GIRL HOPING FOR ROMANTIC TIT-FOR-TAT. OR, YOU KNOW, JUST TIT.

HA.

"I TRIED TO GET OUT OF IT. SIMPLE AS GETTING OUT OF QUICKSAND. MANAGED TO GET A JOB IN THE TECH SECTOR DOING ENCRYPTION--THE ART OF HIDING. SOMETHING I'M GOOD AT."

YEAH. ME, TOO.

BUT I COULDN'T STOP. KEPT USING MY NEW PRIVILEGES TO FIGHT TROLLS. GOT SHIT-CANNED FAST.

"EVENTUALLY I TOOK A JOB WITH IWF--THE INTERNET WATCH FOUNDATION. I THOUGHT IF I COULD HELP BAG PEDOS, THAT WOULD FIX IT."

"FIX *WHAT?*"

"I DON'T KNOW. *IT*. ALL THE BAD THINGS I'D DONE.

"BUT THE FIRST THING TO DO, TO MAKE SURE YOU GOT THE STUFF, THEY SHOW YOU CHILD PORN, IN ASCENDING ORDER OF OBSCENITY. LEVEL 1 TO LEVEL 5.

"I DIDN'T MAKE IT PAST LEVEL 2. I FUCKING *FAILED*."

"THAT'S NOT FAILURE. IT MEANS YOU'RE NOT AS RUINED AS YOU THINK. YOU'VE GOT GOODNESS IN YOU. I CAN FEEL--"

DON'T GIVE ME THAT SHIT! FUCK YOUR DO-GOODER COFFEE! YOU'RE NOT GOING TO SAVE *ME* ON YOUR WAY OUT!

HIRED A FEY DISHWASHER ONCE. TRIED TO DO HIM A FAVOR. PEOPLE FOUND OUT, NEARLY BURNT THIS PLACE DOWN.

COFFEE'S ON ME. BUT GET OUT. AND DON'T YOU, OR ANY OTHERS OF YOUR KIND, COME BACK.

DINER

LIGHT... MOTHERFUCKER... *LIGHT...*

DINER

ALL THE TIMES I TRIED TO GET BETTER...YOU MAKE ME REMEMBER THEM. THAT SOME KIND OF FAERIE SUPERPOWER?

I MEAN, YEAH, I HAD MY CRYPTO-ANARCHIST TAKE-DOWN-THE-MEGACORPS PHASE. WHAT TROLL DIDN'T?

BUT I KNOW WHO I AM. ***WHAT*** I AM. ON A GOOD WEEK, I CAN MAKE THREE GRAND. ***THREE GRAND***. IT'S REALLY FUCKING EASY TO DO AWFUL THINGS WHEN ALL YOU GOTTA DO IS CLICK A BUTTON...

NOW YOU SHOW UP. REMIND ME OF SHIT I USED TO BE PROUD OF. AT THE SAME TIME ASKING ME TO...

...YOU REALIZE WHAT YOU'VE ASKED ME TO DO?

ALL I CAN TELL YOU IS THAT IT'S FOR A GOOD CAUSE. I SWEAR.

GREAT. THAT'LL FUCKING HELP ME IN THE DEAD OF FUCKING NIGHT.

HAVE YOU...?

NO, YOU DIDN'T COME TO RESCUE ME. YOU CAME TO GET WHAT YOU WANT, SAME AS ANYONE ELSE. YOU'RE JUST CLEVER ENOUGH TO USE COFFEE INSTEAD OF A WRENCH.

I MADE A ***CONTACT***. SOMEONE WHO WORKS WITH KAAPO. CALLS HIMSELF ***ZACARIAS***.

I USED TO KNOW A KID NAMED ZACARIAS. JEWISH NAME. MEANS "GOD REMEMBERS."

WELL, I HOPE GOD REMEMBERS I TRIED TO TALK YOU OUT OF THIS. THIS ZACARIAS, HE WANTS ***PROOF***. HE WANTS ME TO SHOOT A VIDEO OF YOU. OF YOUR...

MY ***WINGS***. OKAY. LET'S DO IT.

YOU GOT A PHONE?

LEGENDS DON'T CARRY PHONES. CAN'T RISK BEING TRACKED.

SOMETHING ELSE WE HAVE IN COMMON. I DON'T REALLY LIKE BEING TRACKED EITHER.

ALL RIGHT. BACK TO MY PLACE, I GUESS. IF WE'RE DOING THIS, LET'S GET IT FUCKING DONE.

8 DAYS LATER

THIRD BUILDING AFTER THE BURNED-DOWN FACTORY, HE SAID.

WE CAN STILL TURN BACK.

NO.

I MADE THE VIDEO, SURE. I SENT THE VIDEO, YES. BUT I'M ALSO THE ONE DRIVING THE TRUCK.

ONLY BECAUSE YOU INSISTED. YOUR JOB IS FINISHED.

LISTEN, BOSS. MY *ROLE* MIGHT BE FINISHED. BUT MY *CONSCIENCE?*

AND HERE I THOUGHT THAT ORGAN DIED A DECADE AGO.

THERE. THIRD BUILDING.

STILL FEELING LUCKY?

HE'S JUST MEETING ME. HE'S NOT DOING ANYTHING *TO* ME. YOU SAID.

WHAT DID I SAY ABOUT PEOPLE ONLINE VERSUS HOW THEY ARE I.R.L.?

THUMP!

HEY! WAIT!

THANKS.

DON'T *THANK* ME. DON'T YOU DARE *THANK* ME FOR WHAT I DID. JESUS CHRIST. IT'S GODDAMN CHRISTMAS EVE.

DRIVE AWAY. WHEN I'M DONE, I'LL WALK BACK TO THE MAIN ROAD. CATCH THE BUS.

FORGET WHATEVER I SAID. WHATEVER *HE* SAID. THAT MAN IN THERE? HE'S GOING TO MAKE SURE YOU'RE REAL. THEN HE'LL TAKE YOU. NOW. TONIGHT.

I'M NOT GOING ANYWHERE.

ALL RIGHT. BUT IF YOU'RE GOING TO STAY... TURN OFF YOUR LIGHTS AND BACK UP WHERE HE CAN'T SEE YOU.

WHY WOULDN'T I JUST--

I'LL THANK YOU IF I *WANT* TO THANK YOU.

EEE-EEE-EEEEEE

...HELLO...?

CHUG-CHUG-CHUG-CHUG...

SÍ, VEN AQUÍ.

HERE. COME HERE.

THE CLOTHES. THE TOP. OFF.

NO-- NO ONE SAID--

SEE THIS? *PISTOLA*? IT IS FOR FUNNY BUSINESS. NO FUNNY BUSINESS, YES?

BUT YOU SAW THE VIDEO...

WITH COMPUTERS, THERE IS NO TELLING. FUNNY BUSINESS EVERYWHERE.

SO YOU...KNOW *KAAPO?*

YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT HE DOES?

I KNOW NO ONE.

WHAT THIS OR THAT MAN DOES, IT IS OF NO MATTER TO ME. I AM A NORMAL MAN. I DO NORMAL THINGS. I TAKE PHONE CALLS. THAT IS ALL. NO FUNNY BUSINESS.

KAAPO... HE'S NOT HERE?

HERE? HE IS FAR AWAY FROM HERE, THAT I CAN TELL YOU.

PLEASE. IT IS COLD AND IN THE MORNING THERE IS CHRISTMAS.

I'M READY.

IT... IT IS...

...MAGNIFICA.

KLIK

WHAT ARE YOU *DOING?!*

I WATCH FOR FAKES... PROSTHETICS...

SSSS!

SNICK

SÍ... ES EL PRODUCTO AUTÉNTICO.

YOU DIDN'T HAVE TO DO THAT.

IT IS ME, MR. KAAPO. ZACARIAS. I AM HERE WITH THE PRODUCT.

IT'S CREDIBLE? YOU'VE DONE THE TEST?

SÍ. GENUINE FAERIE.

I COULD HAVE SHOWN YOU I WAS ***CREDIBLE***. YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE CUT ME.

YES, SIR. RIGHT AWAY. *GRACIAS.*

YOU FOLLOW THESE DIRECTIONS. A PRIVATE PLANE IN FOUR HOURS. BRING NOTHING, *ENTIENDES?*

YOU'RE SENDING ME TO MY DEATH.

¿CÓMO?

YOU'RE SENDING ME, AN INNOCENT YOUNG WOMAN, TO MY TORTURE AND DEATH, AND YOU DON'T EVEN CARE.

NO--DO NOT SAY THAT! I KNOW NOTHING OF WHAT MR. KAAPO DOES! I DO MY SMALL PART AND TAKE MONEY FOR MY FAMILY! IT IS NOT MY BUSINESS!

IT IS THE BUSINESS OF ***ALL*** OF US. WHAT'S HAPPENED TO THE WORLD--IT'S BECAUSE OF PEOPLE LIKE YOU. WHO LOOK AFTER THEIR ***OWN*** AT THE EXPENSE OF EVERYONE ELSE.

CRACK!!

CIERRA LA BOCA!

TOO BAD.

I WAS GOING TO LET YOU LIVE.

SKRUUUCH

SKRUU-UUU-UCH

SANTO DIOS!

SKRUU-UUU-UCH

HAVE MERCY! HAVE MERCY!

YOU...ARE NO *FAERIE*...YOU ARE... A ***FURY***...

YESSSSS... AND WE USSSSSED TO COME ONLY IN *THREESSSSS*...UNTIL PEOPLE LIKE YOU SSSSSCATTERED OUR KIND...ISSSSSOLATED USSSSS...

I AM BUT ONE MAN... PLEASE...*POR FAVOR*...

AND I AM BUT ONE FURY... BUT I THINK ONE...

...WILL BE MORE THAN SSSSSUFFICCCCCIENT.

YOU'RE NEXT, KAAPO.

A FURY IS A GODDESS OF VENGEANCE.

FURIES ALWAYS COME IN THREES.

BUT I'M ALL ALONE. HAVE BEEN SINCE I WAS SMALL. AND I DON'T FEEL ANYTHING LIKE A GODDESS.

UNTIL LAST NIGHT, I'D NEVER HURT ANYONE. NOT **ANYONE.**

RIGHT NOW, I FEEL LIKE A LOST LITTLE GIRL. THAT'S IT.

WOMEN

YOU OKAY IN THERE?

YES.

NO. I'LL NEVER BE OKAY AGAIN.

DON'S GAS & FOOD
BATHROOM KEY.

HOLD ON. PLEASE.

IF I'M EVEN A FEW MINUTES LATE--

JUST HEAR ME OUT. PLEASE?

DELARGE EXECUTIVE AIRPO

DON'T GO.

I KNOW-- THAT'S RICH, RIGHT? COMING FROM ME? YOU WOULDN'T BE IN THIS MESS IF I HADN'T HELPED YOU.

WELL... I SORT OF ***FORCED*** YOU TO HELP ME.

AND I UNDERSTAND ABOUT YOUR MOM. I TRULY DO. WHAT YOU'RE DOING FOR HER--IT'S MORE SELFLESS THAN ANYTHING I'VE EVEN ***IMAGINED*** DOING IN MY WHOLE STUPID LIFE.

DON'T THINK OF ME AS A HERO.

IT'S TOO LATE, NESSA. YOU ***ARE*** A HERO. ***MY*** HERO. I'M NOT GOING TO BE THE SAME PERSON AFTER TODAY. I SWEAR IT. I'M GOING TO DO BETTER.

I'M... GLAD.

I NEED YOU TO HOLD ME ACCOUNTABLE. I NEED YOU TO STAY.

I'M NOT YOUR SPONSOR. OR YOUR GIRLFRIEND. YOU WANT TO BE A BETTER PERSON, DIRK, THAT'S SOMETHING YOU HAVE TO DO YOURSELF.

LOOK--I CAN'T LIVE WITH THIS. I'VE DONE A LOT OF SHITTY THINGS, BUT I CAN'T STAND HERE AND WAVE GOODBYE AS YOU WALK OFF TO YOUR DOOM.

THERE'S GOT TO BE A SPECIAL CORNER OF HELL RESERVED FOR PEOPLE WHO CAUSE THE DEATH OF FAERIES. IT'S LIKE KILLING... LOVE.

I KNOW HOW CHEESY THAT SOUNDS. BUT IF YOU STAY--WE'LL RUN. FUCK MY APARTMENT, MY WHOLE LIFE. WE'LL GO WHERE KAAPO CAN'T FIND US. WE'LL BRING YOUR MOM, FIND A WAY TO HELP HER.

MAYBE THE THREE OF US CAN BUILD SOMETHING TOGETHER. BUILD SOMETHING ***BACK***. HOW IT USED TO BE. BACK WHEN WE ALL HAD SOMETHING TO BELIEVE IN--THAT LITTLE BIT OF ***MAGIC***.

DID YOU GET YOUR FINDER'S FEE?

HUH? IT'S... SUPPOSED TO SHOW UP IN MY ACCOUNT WHEN YOU GET ON THE PLANE.

GO HOME. GATHER YOUR FEE. BUY NAKAMOTO SOME DELUXE KIBBLE. DO SOMETHING GOOD FOR ***YOU***. NOT ME.

IF ONLY YOU'D CONTACTED ME VIRTUALLY--LIKE YOU WERE SUPPOSED TO. IF ONLY I HADN'T MET YOU IN PERSON...

DIRK... THERE IS SOMETHING YOU CAN DO FOR ME.

...

NESSA. THE DARKNET IS A ***MAZE***. I DON'T EVEN KNOW HOW I'D--

AN OLD ***LEGEND OF ZELDA*** VET LIKE YOU? YOU'LL FIGURE IT OUT. I KNOW IT.

I SUPPOSE THEY'RE USING MULTI-SIG DEEP INFRASTRUCTURE... AND THERE'S GOT TO BE A SYSOP TYPE INVOLVED... MAYBE IF I COULD HACK THE TUMBLING SERVICE...

BOOMERS AND THEIR PASSWORDS, RIGHT? YOU'RE HALFWAY THERE ALREADY.

...BUT ONCE I GET THAT INFO, WHAT DO I...?

YOU'VE GOT MORALS, DIRK. USE THEM.

AND I ALMOST FORGOT...

WHAT THE HELL?

I'LL BE GODDAMNED.

MY TOOTH.

YOU KEEP SAVING ME, NESSA.

PARTS OF ME, ANYWAY.

NO GOING BACK NOW.

THERE NEVER WAS ANY GOING BACK. NOT AFTER WE DECIDED.

AS A GROUP. AS A FAMILY.

AND WHAT DID WE DECIDE?

THAT WE WERE DONE BEING MESSED WITH.

SO...CAN YOU TELL ME WHERE WE'RE GOING?

SHH. ENJOY THE RIDE. WON'T BE MUCH TO ENJOY ONCE WE LAND.

MIRACLES EXIST...

...AND NO EXECUTIONER CAN CHANGE THAT.

NOT ANYMORE.

GLONK

WHAT HAPPENS NOW?

HELLO? HELLO?

CLOMP CLOMP CLOMP

WHO'S THERE?

NO ONE OF IMPORTANCE...

I WANTED TO SEE HOW YOU'RE SETTLING IN.

YOU'RE... *KAAPO.*

THAT'S ONE OF MY NAMES. IT'S AN HONOR AND PLEASURE TO MEET YOU, NESSA.

I KNEW YOU WERE REAL.

YEAH? THAT'S GOOD. THAT'S ***BELIEF***. IT'S KIND OF FUNNY, ISN'T IT?

WHEN I WAS LITTLE, I DIDN'T BELIEVE IN ***FAERIES.***

NOW IT'S ***ME*** PEOPLE DON'T BELIEVE IN.

PEOPLE DON'T LIKE TO SEE...WHAT THEY DON'T LIKE TO SEE.

WELL PUT. BACK WHEN THE PLANET WAS STILL RESCUABLE? "WE DON'T SEE ANY CLIMATE CHANGE." WHEN THEY WANTED TO HIRE ILLEGAL LABORERS? "WE DON'T SEE ANY IMMIGRANTS."

NOW THEY DON'T SEE ***US***. THE LEGENDS.

YOU KNOW WHAT IT USED TO FEEL LIKE? SEEING YOUR KIND JUST WALKING AROUND?

"EVERY TIME WE SAW A FEY, IT HURT. HOW STRONG YOU WERE. HOW NOBLE. HOW GLORIOUS. AND WHAT WERE WE IN COMPARISON?

"WE WERE WEAK. SELFISH. UGLY.

"BUT THERE WERE MORE OF US.

"WHAT HAPPENED--IT WAS ONLY A MATTER OF TIME."

THAT'S BETTER. YOU LOOK NICE, NESSA. ALL SET FOR TOMORROW.

TOMORROW?

"A *FAERIE*--THAT'S SOMETHING SPECIAL. SOMETHING THAT WON'T KEEP. ALL OTHER EVENTS ARE SUSPENDED. YOU'RE GOING ON RIGHT AWAY, A HOLIDAY TREAT. I WISH I COULD SAY I COULD MAKE IT PAINLESS...

"...BUT WHO KNOWS? I'VE NEVER DONE A FAERIE BEFORE. PERHAPS YOU CAN PERFORM SOME KIND OF SPELL ON YOURSELF? IF SO, I RECOMMEND YOU DO."

"MAYBE. I CAN TRY."

"IT HURTS TO HEAR YOU SO SAD. LISTEN TO ME. THIS THING THEY CALL ***SNUFF***. I WANT YOU TO THINK OF THE WORD'S ORIGINAL MEANING. SNUFF--***TO INHALE***. TO BREATHE. IT'S A NATURAL THING."

"I'LL NEVER BELIEVE THAT. NO MATTER WHAT YOU DO TO ME."

"WHAT DO YOU HAVE TO LOSE BY CONSIDERING IT? YOUR DEATH ON CAMERA--IT ISN'T EVEN A DEATH. IT'S A ***CHANGE***. THE VIDEO WILL BE A CHRYSALIS AND YOU THE EMERGING BUTTERFLY."

CLOMP CLOMP CLOMP

THERE'S A REASON, NESSA, THAT SO MANY PEOPLE PIN BUTTERFLIES TO THEIR WALL.

HELLO? WHO ELSE IS HERE?

YOU DON'T WANT TO KNOW, ROOKIE. IT'LL ONLY MAKE IT WORSE.

CAN YOU DO ANYTHING TO GET US OUT? PLEASE HELP US IF YOU CAN!

QUIET, HARPY. NO ONE'S COMING TO SAVE US. WE'RE ALL FUCKING DOOMED.

WHO ARE *YOU?* AND WHAT...?

DON'T LISTEN TO THEM. THERE'S ALWAYS HOPE. HIDING IN STRANGE PLACES.

NAME'S *ALLISTER*. I'M A LOWLAND ELF.

I'M GLAD, BEFORE I DIED, TO HAVE HAD THE INDESCRIBABLE HONOR TO MEET A FAERIE. NEARLY MEET, ANYWAY.

HEY, ALLISTER. I'M NESSA. HOW MANY...?

...LEGENDS ARE HERE? LET'S SEE. AFTER OUR PERYTON WAS TAKEN... I BELIEVE FIVE? WE'VE GOT A HARPY, AN ARGUS PANOPTES, AN ECHIDNA. I THINK WE STILL HAVE OUR YETI TOO.

UNBELIEVABLE. AND NONE OF YOU COULD...NOT EVEN TOGETHER...?

THE YETI HAD THE STRENGTH TO BREAK OUT. THAT'S WHY SHE WAS REHOUSED SOMEWHERE ELSE. KAAPO LEAVES VERY LITTLE TO CHANCE.

HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN HERE?

OH, I'VE LOST TRACK. FOUR MONTHS? FIVE?

THAT'S SO LONG. I'M SORRY.

DON'T WORRY. IT'S AN UNUSUAL LENGTH OF TIME. THE ONLY REASON I'M STILL HERE IS THAT...

CLOMP CLOMP CLOMP CLOMP

CLOMP CLOMP CLOMP CLOMP

...THERE'S A GUARD WHO LIKES TO...

LIKES TO WHAT?

BOSSMAN'S ASLEEP, MY SWEET LITTLE ELFIE...

...WHICH MEANS IT'S PLAYTIME.

NO. I NEED TO DO SOMETHING. TO HELP ALLISTER. TO HELP ALL OF THEM.

BUT ARE THERE CAMERAS? BACKUP GUARDS AROUND THE CORNER? I CAN'T REVEAL MYSELF AS A FURY. NOT YET. I'M HERE TO DESTROY THE ROOT, NOT THE BRANCHES.

SHIT. WHAT DO I DO?

NO ONE'S LOOKING, NESSA...JUST A LITTLE TOUCH OF FURY...

Aiii!

SCLORCH

RUN, ALLISTER! *RUN!*

OH GOD! OH GOD! I CAN'T FEEL MY--*OH GOD!*

YES! *HURRY!*

NO, ALLISTER. NOT ME. FREE THE OTHERS.

WHAT? WHY WOULDN'T I--

I SAID LEAVE ME BE! FREE THE OTHERS!

ALL RIGHT! WHATEVER YOU SAY!

THANK YOU, LITTLE ONE.

WHICH WAY DO WE GO? WHAT DO WE DO?

I SEE INTO EVERY DARK CORNER. IT IS TOO LATE TO RUN.

MY GODS.

GET BACK IN YOUR CELLS!

NO. WE STAND AND FIGHT.

BRATTATTATRATTATTATT

YES! NOW RUN! *RUN!*

REEE-REEE-REEE-

I HEAR SOMETHING.

REEE-REEE-REEE!

WE'VE GOT TO HURRY IF WE'RE GOING TO--

POOM

POOM

OH, NO... GO BACK TO YOUR CELLS!

MAKE THIS WORTH IT, NESSA.

THACK-A-THACK-A-THACK--

THACK-A-THACK-A-THACK--

NESSA. DARLING.

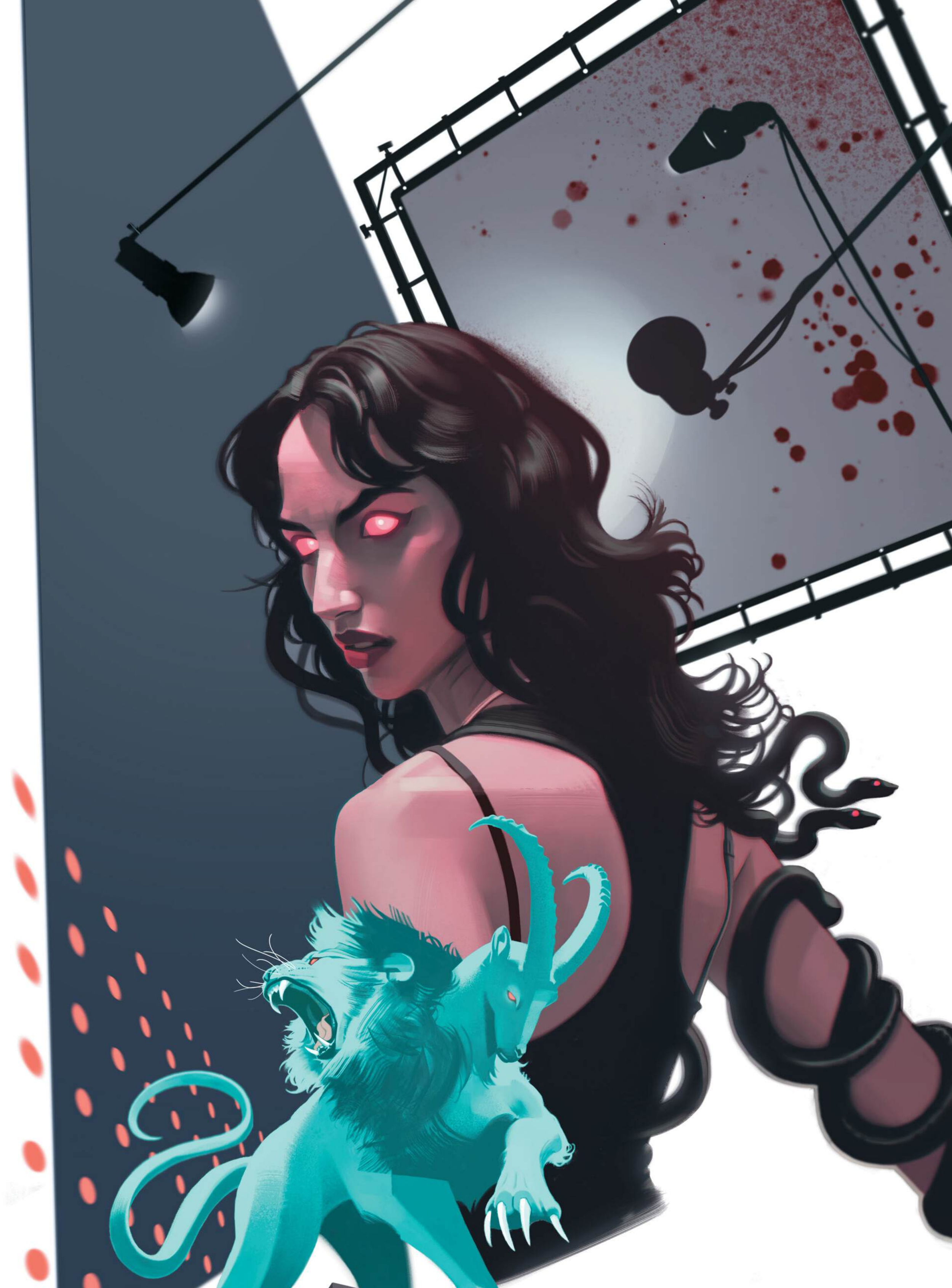
I'M SO PLEASED YOU WERE INTELLIGENT ENOUGH TO AVOID THIS FATE. I SENSED YOU WERE SMARTER THAN THE AVERAGE FEY.

THESE... RARE BEINGS... HOW COULD YOU... HOW *CAN* YOU...?

YOU THINK I WANTED THIS? FOUR SHOWS, CANCELED? THE LOSS OF MONEY IS ONE THING. BUT THE HIT TO MY PRESTIGE? I ***PROMISED*** MY CUSTOMERS THOSE SHOWS.

DEATH IN SOME ANONYMOUS HALLWAY-- IS JUST DEATH. COMMON. WORTHLESS. BUT DEATH IN FRONT OF THE CAMERA? AS YOU'RE ABOUT TO EXPERIENCE...?

...THAT'S *IMMORTALITY*. AND WHAT COULD BE A MORE LEGENDARY END FOR A SO-CALLED LEGEND?



CONFIRMED VIEWERS: 24

UGH... WE AREN'T GETTING PAID ENOUGH FOR THIS.

ZIP IT. WE'VE *NEVER* GOTTEN A PAYOUT THIS GOOD.

FOR A HIT, SURE. THAT'S SIMPLE. PULL THE TRIGGER--*BLAM.* BUT THIS...

=CHOKE=

DON'T YOU PUKE ON ME, DUDE. I'M NOT MOPPING UP *THAT*, TOO. DISTRACT YOURSELF. LET'S GO OVER THE JOB. TARGET'S NAME?

THE TARGET'S NAME IS...

"DIRK OVERHOLT. AGE 30. 1348 WERTHER STREET, APT. 3A."

"WHAT'S HIS MORNING ROUTINE? BASED ON WHAT WE SAW YESTERDAY?"

"COFFEE. CRACK OF DAWN. BUT THIS GUY'S NO NATURAL EARLY RISER. I KNOW THAT LOOK. GUY'S A JUNKIE. HE'S GOING COLD TURKEY. HE'S DELUDING HIMSELF."

"FOCUS, DR. FREUD. WHERE DO WE GET HIM?"

Coffee

"TOO MANY PEOPLE ON THE STREET. THE BUILDING DOOR'S SO ROTTEN, IT'LL GIVE WITH ONE SHOVE."

"WE FOLLOW HIM UP THE STAIRS. ANYONE WE SEE, WE IGNORE. NO ONE'S GOING TO BE A HERO. NOT FOR THE JUNKIE IN 3A."

LIQUORS

MINI MAR

COST

"OUR EMPLOYER SAYS OVERHOLT'S A COMPUTER GUY. WHICH PROBABLY MEANS HE'S GONNA HAVE LOCKS ON THOSE DOORS.

"SO WE BEST JUST SHOOT THROUGH THE DOOR. BLAM BLAM BLAM."

"AGREED. NO MESSING AROUND. NOT WITH THIS PAYDAY."

CONFIRMED VIEWERS: 229

YOU'RE HURTING *YOURSELF* BY DOING THIS. LEGENDS WERE THE HOPE OF THE WORLD. WE STILL COULD BE. LOOK WHAT HAPPENED TO SOCIETY AFTER WE WERE CHASED AWAY.

A HASTENING OF THE INEVITABLE. EARTH WAS GOING DOWN REGARDLESS. I SUPPOSE YOU CONSIDER ME A VULTURE, PROFITEERING OFF SUFFERING.

BUT WE'RE ALL VULTURES NOW, NESSA, PICKING AT THE CARCASS OF A DEAD PLANET. THE ONLY QUESTION LEFT IS WHO HAS THE SHARPEST BEAK.

THE PEOPLE WHO PAY TO WATCH THIS THING... THEY'RE RICH. THEY'RE POWERFUL. THEY COULD SOLVE EVERY PROBLEM IN THE WORLD IF THEY WORKED TOGETHER. INSTEAD OF JUST--

--GIVING THEIR MONEY TO *ME?* YOU MAY BE RIGHT. BUT *WORKING TOGETHER?* THAT SHIP SAILED LONG AGO.

THAT'S NOT TRUE! WHERE I LIVE, WITH OTHER LEGENDS, WE DON'T HAVE MUCH, BUT WE'RE HAPPY. BECAUSE WE WORK TOGETHER.

LISTEN TO YOURSELF, NESSA. YOU FEY *STILL* WANT TO PROVE YOU'RE BETTER THAN US. KINDER. MORE GIVING. MORE BENEVOLENT. IT ONLY MAKES NORMAL PEOPLE HATE YOU ALL THE MORE.

WHY ELSE DO THE RICH AND POWERFUL TURN A BLIND EYE TO ME? BECAUSE YOU FILL THEM WITH SELF-LOATHING. WHAT CAN THEY DO WITH THAT EMOTION BUT TURN IT INTO REVENGE?

CONFIRMED VIEWERS: 351

YOU COULD STILL STOP THIS. I KNOW YOU COULD.

IT'S ADMIRABLY FAERIE-LIKE OF YOU TO SAY SO. BUT NO. I CAN'T. SOMEONE WOULD ONLY REPLACE ME. OUR ENTIRE GLOBAL SYSTEM ENABLES--DEMANDS, EVEN--A PERPETUAL MOTION MACHINE OF PAIN.

THE SAME BLIND EYE THEY TURN TO ME, THEY TURNED TO GENOCIDE. TO HUMAN TRAFFICKING.

PIXELS WILL NEVER REPLACE FLESH AND BLOOD.

BUT THEY ALREADY HAVE. THAT GREASY LITTLE HACKER WHO FOUND YOU?

LEAVE HIM ALONE. HE'S JUST A MAN TRYING TO GET BY.

BLEEP BLOOP BLORP

BUT HE'S NOT A MAN. NONE OF US ARE ANYMORE. WE'RE COGS IN A DEATH MACHINE. CAVEMEN STARTED THE MACHINE THE INSTANT THEY FIT TWO BONES TOGETHER AND INVENTED ***TECHNOLOGY.***

PEOPLE TODAY AND THEIR GADGETS--NOTHING HAS CHANGED. FACTORY OWNERS USED TO BE THE ONES TO ENSLAVE US. NOW WE ENSLAVE OURSELVES.

WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE? I HAVEN'T BEEN FREE IN A LONG, LONG TIME.

BEEP!

CONFIRMED VIEWERS: 487

"ALL RIGHT. WHEN DO WE HIT THIS GUY?"

"OUR EMPLOYER SAYS 6:30. WHO ARE WE TO ARGUE WITH MR. MONEYBAGS?"

06:24

"AND WE GO IN WITH WHAT?"

"WITH GUNS-A-BLAZIN', SISTER. THE MORE NOISE WE MAKE, THE LESS LIKELY ANYONE IS TO GET INVOLVED."

"WE GOT THIS, DUDE. NOW...I THINK YOU MISSED AN EYEBALL BY THE WALL THERE."

"AH, JESUS. NOT GETTING PAID ENOUGH, I'M TELLING YOU."

CA-CLICK

CA-CLICK

CA-CLICK

CA-CLICK

CA-CLICK

CA-CLICK

"KAAPO... PLEASE... LISTEN TO ME..."

WELCOME TO THE STAGE WHERE YOU WILL TRULY BECOME A *LEGEND.*

RIGHT NOW, YOU'RE WHAT? A FAERIE. THAT'S SOMETHING. ONCE WE'RE FINISHED, THOUGH? ONCE YOUR PHYSICAL LIFE HAS ENDED?

YOU'LL BE DIVIDED INTO INFINITE PARTS. YOU'LL REPRODUCE AND REPRODUCE AGAIN--CENTURIES OF DIGITAL OFFSPRING ALMOST INSTANTLY. MORE FRUITFUL THAN ANY OF YOUR ANCESTORS COULD HAVE IMAGINED.

YOU'LL BE VIDEOS. STILL PHOTOS. GIFS. YOU'LL BE LOOPED. TRADED. COLLECTED. DISTRIBUTED. LOVED. DESPISED.

YOU'LL BE ***EVERYTHING***, NESSA. ISN'T THAT BETTER THAN ONE SINGLE INEFFECTUAL LIFE?

DEATH, YOU SEE...IT'S JUST A GLITCH IN AN OUTDATED PROGRAM.

YOU CAN STOP THIS! YOU'RE THE KING HERE! THEY'LL DO WHATEVER YOU SAY!

ME? THE KING? NO...

IT'S THE *CUSTOMER* WHO IS KING.

ONCE FEY ARE BROUGHT HERE, THEY LOSE THEIR ABILITY TO MAINTAIN HUMAN FORM. BECAUSE THERE'S NO HOPE. AND YOUR KIND--THEY RATHER RUN ON THE STUFF, DON'T THEY?

...PROTECT ME, MY GODS... PROTECT ME, MY GODS...

ACID

IT'S TIME TO TRANSFORM, NESSA.

...PROTECT ME, MY GODS... PROTECT...

TRANSFORM, NESSA.

...PROTECT... PROTECT...

TRANSFORM, I SAID!

AAHHH!

...PLEASE... PLEASE...

PROPERTY OF KAAPO

VERY GOOD, NESSA...MY LOVELY FAERIE EMERGES...

...KAAPO...

YES, SAY MY NAME. IT'S PRODUCT PLACEMENT AS VALUABLE AS THAT BRAND ON YOUR BODY.

YOU SEE THESE LIGHTS?

EVERY ONE OF THEM IS SOMEONE WHO'S TUNED IN RIGHT NOW.

WHERE'S YOUR HOPE NOW, NESSA? YOU FEEL ANY? ANY AT ALL?

"THERE... I THINK... I THINK I'M LOCKED--"

"--IN."

BUMF! BUMF! BUMF!

BUMF! BUMF!

KRISSH!

THUMK!

WHAT THE FUCK? WHAT THE FUCK?

BUMF!

CRONCH!

BUMF! BUMF! BUMF!

GET HIM! GET CLOSER!

TELL KOVA I HAVE THE MONEY! I DO! PLEASE!

NEVER HEARD OF ANY "KOVA," JUNKIE.

RRRR!

THE SHIT IS THIS?!

GET IT OFF ME! GET IT OFF ME!

THWUMP

MMFF!

I TRIED TO CHANGE... I'M SORRY... TO EVERYONE I KNOW... I'M SO SORRY...

ZzZZZRRR

THERE... THERE IT IS... JUST LIKE ALLISTER SAID...

...HOPE.

YEARGH!

GGG! SNGGG!

SKLUSH

SHE'S NO FAERIE... NO FAERIE AT ALL...

...SHE'S THE MOST BEAUTIFUL THING I'VE EVER SEEN.

GET IN THERE! STOP HER!

WOOOOF

STAK! STAK! STAK!

AAIII!

THISSSSS ENDSSSSS NOW.

WHAT...WHAT'S HAPPENING...?

WHAT THE FUCK!

JESUS! JESUS CHRIST!

WHAT... WHAT ARE...?

DON'T HURT ME! DON'T HURT ME!

I DON'T SSSSSEE WHY WE SHOULDN'T DESSSSSTROY HIM, DORAE..

SHH, ERIN. JUSSSSST LOOK.

YESSSSS. THISSSSS WASSSSS MADE BY OUR NESSSSSA.

YOU... YOU KNOW NESSA?

SHE ISSSSS OUR THIRD.

WE HAVE BEEN LOOKING FOR HER FOR A LONG TIME.

I KNOW WHERE SHE IS! I MEAN, I KNOW WHO HAS HER. SHE'S IN TROUBLE.

NESSSSSA CAN TAKE CARE OF HERSSSSSELF.

WHAT WE WANT FROM YOU IS SSSSSOMETHING ELSSSSSE. SSSSSOMETHING VERY IMPORTANT TO OUR NESSSSSA.

THAT? I MEAN, I WAS TRYING TO ISOLATE THE USERS...USING AN ASCII STRING TO REVERSE-ENGINEER THE I.P.S...BUT IT'S FUCKING TRASHED...

GIVE IT TO ME.

I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU WANT. DATA ISN'T AN *OBJECT*. IT'S CODE, ONES AND ZEROES--

DON'T TALK TO USSSSS LIKE FOOLSSSSS.

WE MIGHT BE FURIESSSSS. BUT WE LIVE IN *YOUR* UGLY WORLD.

I GUESS MAYBE THIS HARD DRIVE? IT'S THE CLOSEST THING TO--HEY!

BUT IT WILL BE SSSSSOON, ERIN...VERY SSSSSOOON...

PLEASE DO NOT EAT MY FERRET!

ERIN. IT ISSSSS NOT YET TIME TO FEED...

KLOP

SMUTCH

KLUTSCH

I'M... SO SORRY... I BELONG IN... HELL...

SCHLIFF

YESSSSS. BUT FOR YOU, I WILL MAKE IT QUICK.

KAAPO.

YOU THINK YOU'VE RUINED ME? HUH? WELL, GUESS WHAT? THESE MEN YOU KILLED, THEY MEAN NOTHING. FUCKING ***NOTHING***. I CAN GO OUT TOMORROW-- TOMORROW! AND REPLACE THEM.

YOU'VE ACHIEVED NOTHING! NOTHING BUT BECOMING A KILLER YOURSELF!

EXCCCCCEPT THERE WILL BE NO ONE TO HIRE THEM ONCCCCCE YOU ARE GONE.

YOU IDIOT. EVEN CLOSE ENOUGH TO SMELL MY BLOOD, YOU STILL HAVE NO IDEA WHAT YOU'RE DEALING WITH.

AND YOU CALL YOURSELF A ***LEGEND.***

A CHIMERA...?

HOW COULD YOU DO THISSSSS? TO YOUR OWN KIND?

HUMANS TURN AGAINST THEIR OWN EVERY DAY. PROFIT FROM THE MISERY OF OTHERS. WHY SHOULD WE FEY BE ANY DIFFERENT?

BECAUSSSSSE WE'RE NOT FEY! WE'RE LEGENDSSSSS!

THE OLD LEGENDS ARE FINISHED. THE NEW LEGENDS HAVE ONLY BEGUN.

A CHIMERA... KILLING A FURY... STREAMING LIVE?

THIS WILL BE LEGEND. YOU FORGET, NESSA...

PROPERTY OF KAAPO

...YOU'RE MINE.

WHAT... NO...

THEY'RE LOGGING OFF... THEY'RE GOING AWAY...

WHY ARE YOU GOING AWA--

EEUH!

ZEUS SALUTES YOU.

ZEUSSSSSS? ZEUSSSSSS HASSSSS ABANDONED USSSSS.

BUT THE LEGENDS WILL NOT ABANDON ONE ANOTHER.

I NEVER SAW NESSA AGAIN. SOME DAYS I WONDER IF I MADE HER UP. I WAS IN ROUGH SHAPE BACK THEN. I MIGHT HAVE MADE UP **ANYTHING.**

BUT ON DAYS LIKE TODAY...

...I KNOW SHE WAS REAL.

CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP

Coffee

THINGS ARE CHANGING.

CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP

I DON'T KNOW HOW ALL THE TORTURE VIDEOS WENT VIRAL. IT WASN'T ME. BUT GO VIRAL THEY GODDAMN **DID.** KIDS WATCHED THEM THE MOST. AND NOW IT'S KIDS LEADING THE **CHANGE.**

THERE'S NO GOOD SOIL IN THESE PARTS. ONLY CONCRETE AND STEEL. YET SOMEHOW...HOPE TOOK ROOT.

MAYBE NOW HOPE WILL GROW. MAYBE IT WON'T. BUT I'M THANKFUL IT HAS THE CHANCE. THAT **I** HAVE THE CHANCE.

I'M JUST PLAIN THANKFUL.

NO, DIRK...

...THANK YOU.

END

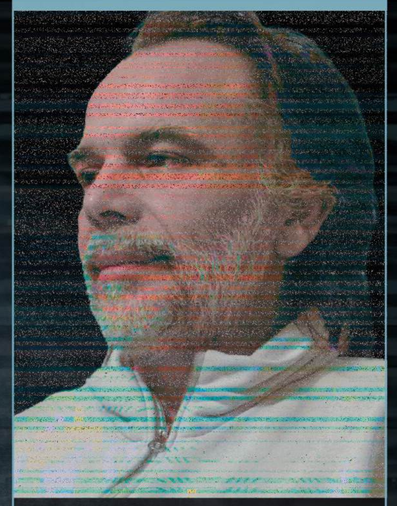
< BLAME TROJAN ON ADVENTURELAND VIDEO. IT WAS THE FIRST VIDEO-RENTAL BUSINESS IN MY SMALL IOWA HOMETOWN. AT THE BACK OF THE STORE, IN A SHAMEFUL LITTLE CUL-DE-SAC, WAS THE HORROR SECTION. SO MANY NIGHTMARES PACKAGED IN SOFT, BEATEN CARDBOARD. CHOPPING MALL'S BAG FULL OF GUTS. EVIL ED'S HATCHET-SPLIT FACE. HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO ME'S DEATH-KABOB. BUT THE ONE I'D PICK UP AGAIN AND AGAIN, WISHING I WAS BRAVE ENOUGH TO RENT IT, KNOWING I WASN'T, WAS FACES OF DEATH.

< EXPERIENCE THE GRAPHIC REALITY OF DEATH, CLOSE UP >, THE FRONT COVER DARED. I WAS NINE YEARS OLD. YET I WANTED TO SEE IT. I WANTED TO SEE THE ADVERTISED ROTTEN CADAVERS, SLAUGHTERHOUSE KILLS, ALLIGATOR ATTACKS, HOLOCAUST ATROCITIES, TRAFFIC ACCIDENTS, AND PLANE CRASH AFTERMATH FOOTAGE.

< DID THIS MAKE ME A TERRIBLE PERSON? THE LOCATION OF THE HORROR CUBBY SEEMED TO SUGGEST SO. IT WASN'T DIFFICULT TO IMAGINE RENTING FACES OF DEATH, THE FIRST IN A SERIES OF CATASTROPHIC DECISIONS THAT WOULD LEAD ME STRAIGHT DOWN THE DRAIN. IT WAS THE MID-80s, THE AGE OF JUST SAY NO. SAYING < YES > WAS TANTAMOUNT TO SHOOTING CRACK DIRECTLY INTO MY EYEBALLS. THERE WAS NO COMING BACK.

< QUERY: AUTHOR?

DANIEL KRAUS



< QUERY: ARTIST?

LACI

< SOMETIME IN THE MID-1960's, I WAS ABOUT SEVEN YEARS OLD AND I WAS WATCHING TV IN MY HOME WITH MY SISTER, WHO WAS TWO YEARS YOUNGER. OUR PARENTS WERE AWAY AT THE TIME. BACK THEN, TV SCREENS WERE SMALL AND ROUNDED, AND THE PICTURE WAS BLACK AND WHITE. THERE WAS ONLY ONE CHANNEL WHERE I LIVED. YOU COULDN'T CHOOSE WHAT TO WATCH. WE HAD BEEN FOLLOWING THOSE BLACK AND WHITE IMAGES ON THE SCREEN WITH SEMI-INTEREST UNTIL A SHOW ABOUT PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES STARTED. I STARTED WATCHING THE SHOW CLOSELY BECAUSE OF A FEELING I DISCOVERED IN MYSELF FOR THE FIRST TIME. I DIDN'T KNOW WHAT THAT FEELING WAS CALLED BACK THEN, BUT IT WAS EMPATHY THAT MADE MY LITTLE HEART TIGHTEN IN MY CHEST. MY SISTER WAS STILL ONLY SEMI-INTERESTED, BUT AT ONE POINT SHE STARTED LOUDLY IMITATING A PERSON FROM THE SHOW WHO WAS LIMPING.
< THIS MADE ME ANGRY >.

< BECAUSE OF THE MIXED FEELINGS INSIDE ME, I DIDN'T KNOW WHAT TO DO WITH MYSELF. I STARTED NERVOUSLY WANDERING AROUND THE ROOM, WANTING TO GET THE BUILDING ANXIETY OUT OF MY SYSTEM.
< MY FIST VIOLENTLY MOVED TOWARDS THE WALL >.

< AUTOAGGRESSION >. IT WAS EASIER FOR ME TO ENDURE THE PHYSICAL PAIN OF A BROKEN FIST THAN THE MENTAL PAIN I WAS EXPERIENCING. MY FIST DIDN'T HURT SO MUCH AS IT SUDDENLY BECAME HEAVY AND HOT. THE ROOM WENT VERY QUIET. MY SISTER AND I LOOKED AT EACH OTHER IN SILENCE. AFTERWARDS, WE AGREED NOT TO TELL OUR PARENTS ANYTHING ABOUT THE INCIDENT. I HID THE BROKEN HAND FROM MY PARENTS VERY SUCCESSFULLY UNTIL IT HEALED. EVEN TODAY, I REMEMBER THE BLACK AND WHITE TV WHENEVER MY HAND ACHES, AS AN ETERNAL REMINDER THAT YOU HAVE TO ARTICULATE YOUR FEELINGS AND RESPECT OTHER PEOPLE BEING DIFFERENT FROM YOURSELF.

< THERE IS A SLIGHT SIMILARITY BETWEEN THIS EARLY EXPERIENCE WITH FEELINGS AND THE PROTECTIVE ROLE OF THE MAIN CHARACTER OF THIS SERIES, < NESSA >, WHO IS TRANSFORMED BY PAINFUL EMPATHY FROM A FAIRY INTO AN AVENGER. THE READERS OF TROJAN ARE PRESENTED WITH A NEW FANTASY WORLD POPULATED BY < LEGENDS >, MYTHICAL CREATURES WHO ARE < UNJUSTLY DESPISED BY HUMANS > AND WHOSE FATE DEPENDS ON THE OUTCOME OF THEIR PROTECTOR'S RECKONING WITH DARK AND DEPRAVED FORCES. FROM ISSUE TO ISSUE, OUR PROTAGONIST NESSA IS GOING TO GO THROUGH THE GOLGOTHA OF TRANSFORMATION FROM AN INNOCENT AND SENSITIVE BEING TO...SOMETHING MORE.

< EXCEPT THAT I DID EVENTUALLY WATCH IT AND I DIDN'T INSTANTANEOUSLY DETERIORATE INTO A SLAVERING MANIAC. FOR THE RECORD, FACES OF DEATH IS A VILE < MOVIE >, BUT THE TITLE HAS COME TO REPRESENT MORE TO ME THAN ALMOST ANYTHING ELSE I WATCHED AS A YOUNG PERSON. TO ME, IT REPRESENTS FACING FEARS, AND IT HAS INSPIRED A CAREER OF PLUMBING WHAT I HOPE IS PERIODICALLY BEAUTIFUL ART FROM THE GUTTERS OF THE GRUESOME OR GROTESQUE.

< FOR MY ENTIRE ADULT LIFE, I'VE BEEN FASCINATED BY THE NOTION THAT SNUFF FILMS EXIST AND PEOPLE WILL PAY TO SEE THEM, AS SURELY AS I PAID TO SEE FACES OF DEATH. I TOOK NOTES ON A NOVEL ABOUT SNUFF FILMS FOR OVER A DECADE BEFORE A CASUAL CONVERSATION WITH AWA'S AXEL ALONSO INSPIRED ME TO SHIFT MY THINKING. < WHAT IF IT WAS A COMIC? > THAT SIX-WORD QUESTION GAVE ME PERMISSION TO ADD GENRE ELEMENTS INTO THE MIX.

< IN MERE MINUTES, THE WHOLE STORY CLICKED INTO PLACE...A STORY THAT I'D BEEN, IN ONE FORM OR ANOTHER, WORKING ON FOR 35 YEARS. WE ARE ALL TANTALIZED BY THE DARKEST IMAGES OUR WORLD HAS TO SHOW US. MOST OF US TURN AWAY. BUT SOME CANNOT, EITHER FOR REASONS OF PROFESSION OR TERRIBLE FORTUNE.

< THE CHARACTERS IN TROJAN ARE SUCH PEOPLE. I HOPE YOU'LL ACCEPT THE DARE AND KEEP TURNING THE PAGES. SOME OF WHAT YOU SEE WILL, IN FACT, BE GRUESOME. HANG IN THERE.

< SKETCHES, LAYOUTS AND
CHARACTER DESIGNS BY >
LACI

ISSUE #2 VARIANT COVER BY
OLIVIER COIPEL
AND ALEJANDRO SANCHEZ

ISSUE #2 VARIANT
COVER INKS BY
OLIVIER COIPEL

ISSUE #1 VARIANT COVER INKS BY
MIKE DEODATO JR.

SON OF ULTRON

"THIS FAN... THIS MONSTER!"